

REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance of the subject application are respectfully requested.

Upon entry of this Amendment, claims 1-17 are pending in the application. In response to the Office Action (Paper No. 4), Applicant respectfully submits that the pending claims define patentable subject matter.

Claims 3, 4 and 9-13 are objected to under 37 C.F.R. § 1.75(c) as being of improper dependent form for failing to further limit the subject matter of a previous claim. Claims 3, 4 and 7-17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. By this Amendment, Applicant has amended the claims to improve clarity. Accordingly, the Examiner is requested to remove the objection to the claims and the § 112, second paragraph, rejection.

Claims 1, 3, 4, 6, 7 and 16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Herbelleau. The Examiner asserts that the claimed sub-grooves reads on the slits shown in Figures 1 and 6 of Herbelleau. With regards to claims 1, 3, 4 and 6, Applicant respectfully submits that Herbelleau does not teach or suggest “a central main portion of the sub-groove is formed so that a groove bottom is inclined from a groove opening at an outer surface side of the block in a direction of a main stress applied from a road surface to the block and end portions of the sub-groove are formed so that the groove bottom is not inclined from the groove opening”, as recited in independent claims 1 and 16. Rather, Herbelleau teaches that the sub-grooves are inclined with respect to the radial direction of the tire along the entire length of the sub-grooves.

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.111
Application No. 09/886,119

With regards to independent claim 7, Applicant respectfully submits that Herbelleau does not teach or suggest “at least a central main portion of a sub-groove formed in each block extends in a substantially same direction as a diagonal of the block and is arranged at a position offset from the diagonal.” Rather, Herbelleau teaches that the sub-grooves are arranged in parallel to the widthwise sides of the blocks.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 1, 3, 4, 6, 7 and 16 should be allowable over Herbelleau because the cited reference does not teach or suggest all of the features of the claims.

Claims 1, 3, 4, 6 and 7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by EP 810104. Similar to Herbelleau, EP 810104 does not teach or suggest “a central main portion of the sub-groove is formed so that a groove bottom is inclined from a groove opening at an outer surface side of the block in a direction of a main stress applied from a road surface to the block and end portions of the sub-groove are formed so that the groove bottom is not inclined from the groove opening”, as recited in independent claim 1. Further, EP 810104 does not teach or suggest “at least a central main portion of a sub-groove formed in each block extends in a substantially same direction as a diagonal of the block and is arranged at a position offset from the diagonal”, as recited in independent claim 7. Rather, EP 810104 teaches that the sub-grooves are arranged in parallel to the widthwise sides of the blocks and the sub-grooves are inclined along their entire the entire length with respect to the radial direction of the tire.

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.111
Application No. 09/886,119

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 1, 3, 4, 6 and 7 should be allowable over EP 810104 because the cited reference does not teach or suggest all of the features of the claims.

Claims 7-13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by JP 2-81773. With regards to claim 7, Applicant respectfully submits that JP 2-81773 does not teach or suggest “at least a central main portion of a sub-groove formed in each block extends in a substantially same direction as a diagonal of the block and is arranged at a position offset from the diagonal”, as claimed. Further, JP 2-81773 does not teach or suggest the central main portion of the sub-grooves are formed so as to incline with respect to a radial direction of the tire, as recited in claim 7. With regards to claim 8, Applicant respectfully submits that JP 2-81773 does not teach or suggest “at least a central main portion of the sub-groove is arranged substantially in parallel to a diagonal of the block at a position offset from the diagonal”, as claimed. Rather, JP 2-81773 (Figure 5) teaches that the sub-grooves (sipes) are arranged perpendicular to the length-wise sides of the blocks.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 7-13 should be allowable over JP 2-81773 because the cited reference does not teach or suggest all of the features of the claims.

Claims 7-14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by or under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Landers ‘169. With regards to claim 7, Applicant respectfully submits that Landers ‘169 does not teach or suggest the central main portion of the sub-grooves are formed so as to incline with respect to a radial direction of the tire, as claimed. With regards to claim 8, Applicant respectfully submits that JP 2-81773 does not teach or

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.111
Application No. 09/886,119

suggest “at least a central main portion of the sub-groove is arranged substantially in parallel to a diagonal of the block at a position offset from the diagonal”, as claimed. Rather, Landers ‘169 simply teaches that the central main portion of the sub-groove is arranged perpendicular to the length-wise sides of the blocks.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 7-14 should be allowable over Landers ‘169 because the cited reference does not teach or suggest all of the features of the claims.

Claims 1-7, 15 and 16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Landers ‘169 in view of EP 810104 and/or Lurois. With regards to claims 1-6 and 16, Applicant respectfully submits that the cited references, alone or in combination, do not teach or suggest “a central main portion of the sub-groove is formed so that a groove bottom is inclined from a groove opening at an outer surface side of the block in a direction of a main stress applied from a road surface to the block and end portions of the sub-groove are formed so that the groove bottom is not inclined from the groove opening”, as recited in independent claims 1 and 16. Rather, EP 810104 and Lurois teach that the sub-grooves are inclined with respect to the radial direction of the tire along the entire length of the sub-grooves. Further, Landers ‘169 does not disclose that sub-grooves have any inclination with respect to the radial direction of the tire.

With regards to independent claim 7, Applicant respectfully submits that the cited references, alone or in combination, do not teach or suggest “at least a central main portion of a sub-groove formed in each block extends in a substantially same direction as a diagonal of the block and is arranged at a position offset from the diagonal”, as claimed. Rather, EP 810104

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.111
Application No. 09/886,119

teaches that the sub-grooves are arranged in parallel to the widthwise sides of the block and Lurois does not teach or suggest that the blocks have sub-grooves. Further, Landers '169 discloses that sub-grooves are not arranged at a position offset from the diagonal.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 1-7, 15 and 16 should be allowable over the combination, Landers '169, EP 810104 and/or Lurois because the cited references do not teach or suggest all of the features of the claims.

Claim 17 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Landers '169 in view of EP 573890 and Landers '766. Applicant respectfully submits that the combined references do not teach or suggest "at least a central main portion of the sub-groove is arranged substantially in parallel to a diagonal of the block at a position offset from the diagonal", as claimed. Rather, Landers '169 and Landers '766 each the sub-groove is arranged at angle with respect to a diagonal of the block (i.e., not in parallel with the diagonal) and EP 573890 does not disclose that the blocks have sub-grooves.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 17 should be allowable over the combination, Landers '169, EP 573890 and Landers '766 because the cited references do not teach or suggest all of the features of the claims.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.111
Application No. 09/886,119

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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